



Cache River State Natural Area

Public Hunting Fact Sheet



The Cache River State Natural Area, containing 14,489 acres, is state-owned and managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. This natural area is composed of two management units along the Cache River in Johnson, Pulaski and Massac counties. These units are the Little Black Slough (Upper Cache River) and the Lower Cache River areas. There are approximately 11,946 huntable acres with 22 hunter/parking accesses.

The Little Black Slough unit, containing 8,318 acres, lies 3 miles south of Vienna and north of Belknap between Il. Rt. 37 and U. S. Rt. 45. Little Black Slough has approximately 6,402 acres open to hunting and 1,916 acres that are dedicated nature preserves, or restricted areas. Dedicated nature preserves are restricted areas closed to hunting. There are currently 13 hunter access areas at Little Black Slough: Marshall Ridge, North Cypress, Snakehole, Belknap, Forman, West Belknap, Little Black Slough, North Belknap, East Bluff, Rt. 45 North, Cave Creek, South Cypress, and Glass Hill. (See map and fact sheet for locations.) The hunter access areas provide a gravel parking area, with a hunter registration box and information. All hunters are required to sign in and out at hunter registration boxes provided at the hunter access areas, and to report their harvest by species.

The Heron Pond, Wildcat Bluff, Section 8 Woods and Cache River Wetlands Center parking areas should not be used as hunter accesses. These are accesses into restricted areas and dedicated nature preserves: **no hunting is permitted**. Hunters may not cross a dedicated nature preserve with a weapon for any purpose.

The Lower Cache River unit consists of approximately 6,171 acres. It is located along the Cache River east of Karnak to the Massac/Pulaski county line, and west to the Cache River bridge south of Perks in Johnson and Pulaski counties. The Lower Cache River area has approximately 5,544 acres open to hunting and 506 acres that are dedicated nature preserves or restricted areas. The Lower Cache River area has 9 constructed hunter accesses: Big Cypress, Flatwoods, East and West Karnak, North Main, Lower Cache River, West Rt. 37, Perks Road, and Rt 45 South. There is a 10 H.P. motor boat limit required on the Lower Cache River.

The Cache River State Natural Area is primarily known for squirrel, deer and duck hunting opportunities. There are also fair opportunities for rabbit, quail, dove, woodcock, raccoon and turkey hunting. Regulations for all huntable species coincide with statewide season dates, hours and limits. Squirrel hunters at Little Black Slough and Lower Cache River units may use .22 caliber rimfire rifles. Trapping is by permit only and coyote and skunk seasons coincide with the statewide fox season dates. At this time, all hunting will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Non-toxic shot is required for waterfowl and migratory bird(dove) hunting. No permanent blinds or pits may be dug or constructed. All blinds must be portable or established with natural vegetation and must be removed or dismantled at the end of each day's hunt. Cutting live vegetation in the area is illegal. It is also illegal to construct or use any tree stand built with nails, screws or any device which pierces or cuts the bark of the tree on which it is installed. Tree stands used for hunting deer must be legibly marked with the owner's name, address and telephone number when left unattended. Tree stands may be left unattended only from September 15 to January 15. Only one tree stand per hunter is permitted.

All motorized vehicles must remain on roads or in access areas. No ATVs (All Terrain Vehicles), bicycles, horses or mules are permitted. Man-pulled carts can be used to retrieve deer in remote areas. Hunting areas can be accessed along the Tunnel Hill State Trail by hiking or biking. All weapons must be cased or bow and arrows locked while traveling along the Tunnel Hill trail right-of-way corridor. Tunnel Hill State Trail is a restricted area closed to hunting. It is unlawful to hunt, trap or discharge a gun or bow or arrow device along, upon, or across the right-of way of the Tunnel Hill State trail.

All snakes are protected in this area. Snakes are beneficial reptiles and part of the natural ecosystem.

No camping is permitted in this area. Camping is available within a 30-mile radius at Ferne Clyffe State Park, Dixon Springs State Park, Fort Massac State Park and Shawnee National Forest campgrounds.

For maps and additional information, contact the Site Superintendent, Cache River State Natural Area, 930 Sunflower Lane, Belknap, Illinois 62908, or call 618/634-9678.

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